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INTELLIGENCE

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(Newell
Center)*

Central Intelligence Bulletin

Top Secret

c 173

31 August 1967

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Approved For Release 2002/11/20 : CIA-RDP79T00975A010200270001-8

Approved For Release 2002/11/20 : CIA-RDP79T00975A010200270001-8

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Communist China - North Vietnam: Peking's
first authoritative comment on intensified US bombing
of North Vietnam reflects continuing concern that Hanoi
will not remain steadfast.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry statement, broadcast on 30 August, appears designed to convince the Vietnamese that they should reject negotiations and continue the fight against the US. It asserts that "forcing peace talks through bombing" is a "shopworn trick" of the US and the Soviet Union. Peking claims that no "peace talks plots" will succeed because the Vietnamese people are determined to defeat the US, and that the recent bombing raids indicate the increasing weakness of the US position in Vietnam.

This statement is the strongest expression of support for North Vietnam in several months. It declares that the Chinese people are determined to "fight shoulder to shoulder" with the Vietnamese--the first time Peking has used this formulation since last April. Like earlier pledges of support, however, this one emphasizes the role of the Vietnamese in defeating the US.

Although the statement asserts that intensified bombing shows that US aggression is aimed against China as well as against the Vietnamese, it implies that the Chinese will become directly involved only if attacked by US forces. Peking declares once again that the Chinese people are "waiting in battle array" and will defeat "imperialist forces" if they should dare to "invade" China.

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